



News and Views

The Newsletter of the Tennessee Public Library Management Institute

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Institooters discussing the best term to describe library users

Just Who Are Those People Anyway?

Thursday morning began with an interesting discussion on the correct terminology to use when referring to a library's visitors. Traditionally, the terms "patrons" and "users" are used to describe those individuals who visit the library. In today's society, some feel that the best way to refer to these individuals is as "customers". Libraries are focused on serving the community's needs, and many refer to the "customer service" they provide. However,

some feel this is still not a correct term to use because it implies that the visitors are there to purchase something even though most of the services in the library are free. The Institooters were not able to resolve this issue in Thursday's discussion. However, all agreed it would be interesting to watch how this debate may be resolved in the future.



Sharon Wiseman talks about staffing for results

Staffing for Results

Thursday's agenda focused on staffing for results. Sharon and Dan Wiseman were once again on hand to provide insight and instruction of the best methods for librarians to use to achieve this goal.

Sharon Wiseman began the day with a discussion of *Planning for Results* by Tennessee's own Sandra Nelson. The first step in the planning process is to assess the community's needs. Mrs.

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Wiseman stressed that relevance to the community is the key factor in the planning for results process. It does not matter how well a library is designed. If it does not match the community need, then it will not be successful. One way to assess needs is to perform a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis on both the community and the library. This can alert the library to what is already needed and available and what may be needed or will not be available in the future. Another suggestion is to try to get as many representatives from various groups in the community involved in the planning process to help determine their community's needs.

The next step is to determine the needs the library is suitable to fill. Some communities may expect the library to perform or host services in the community that are not appropriate for the library, such as child vaccinations. It is important for all parties to remember the boundaries of the library's responsibility to the community.

The next steps include prioritizing library service responses, setting goals and objectives, and reviewing the library's organization design (staffing, collection, facilities, technology and processing/services). Mrs. Wiseman added that the smaller the library and the smaller the budget available to the library, the more important the planning process is to ensure a successful organization.

The discussion then moved forward to the topic of staffing for results. An important factor to consider when staffing for results is the emotional intelligence of each staff member. In his study of emotional intelligence, author Daniel Goleman says that some bright individuals with high IQ's are not socially successful because they do not know how to filter their responses. Sharon Wiseman likened such staff

members to bitter coffee made without a filter. Such staff members come across as prickly personalities who are too direct with their answers, and they can reflect badly on the overall image of a library. Good managers should hire for attitude and train for skills.



The Institooters discussing staffing for results

Later in the day, Dan Wiseman provided the Institooters with some key concepts to remember when analyzing staff performance problems: 1) Employees cannot change when they do not know what the problem is 2) Managers should not focus on insignificant problems 3) Follow-up the reinforcement trail to find potential solutions 4) Remember that most problems are either ability deficiencies or work design (environmental) or motivational in nature and 5) Success depends on your ability to diagnose what is the nature of the problem.

Mr. Wiseman then went on to explain the ABC's of how to change or reinforce behavior. Discover the "A"ctivators of certain "B"ehaviors and then decide on the appropriate "C"onsequences for the situation.

The Institooters wrapped up the day by providing suggestions to each other on how to deal with tough staffing situations. It was yet another great day of learning and discovering new ideas.

List of Resources

Here is a list of suggested materials for planning and staffing for results. Most of these should be available through the Regional Library or Interlibrary Loan:

Tell It! Manual

-Published by the American Library Association

Staffing For Results: A Guide to Working Smarter

- By Diane Mayo

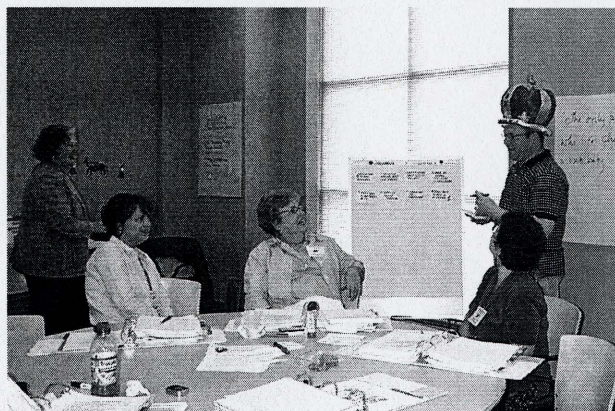
Checklists for Public Library Managers

- Jay Wozny

Working with Emotional Intelligence

- Daniel Goleman

Ones to Watch Out For:



Curt True wants to be "King for a Day!"

Geometric Jigsaw Review

Jane Pinkston led the Institooters through a review of the week's activities Thursday afternoon via a geometric jigsaw puzzle. Institooters looked at the impressions of the week through geometric figures: 1) What ideas had they "squared" with or reinforced? 2) What ideas came full "circle" for them during the week? 3) What new "angles" could they take with old dilemmas? 4) What new direction (as symbolized by the letter Z) would they now go in? What new actions would they take as librarians?

The Institooters have definitely discovered some helpful new ideas and great strategies for improving their libraries. One final lesson learned by the Institooters was to remember to bring a jacket new year for those cold conference rooms!

Quotable Quotes

Throughout the week of the Public Library Management Institute, the "Institooters" and guests have several opportunities to voice their opinions and feelings about various things. Here are some "Quotable Quotes":

On how to handle "chatty" patrons and staff - Put up a sign saying *"If you didn't pack a lunch, don't get in this line."*

- Norma Humphries

We have flexibility, now give me another "F" word . . . You people have dirty minds!"

- Dan Wiseman